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CLASSIFICATION OF  
EDUCATIONAL RADIO RESEARCH

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CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL RADIO RESEARCH

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## F O R E W O R D

This classification of educational research, from a functional point of view, should prove helpful to researchers and to those who expect to benefit from the products of research. The scheme of classification proposed by the authors, H M Beville, Jr., Research Manager, National Broadcasting Company, and Cuthbert Daniel, Office of Radio Research, Columbia University, is valuable to civic and educational groups and to broadcasters.

In addition to classifying research, this report offers the readers very brief summaries of what is known in certain areas. For example, in discussing the influence of educational broadcasts on the thinking of those who listen, research shows that the influence is directly proportional to the seriousness with which one listens. This fact is very important for teachers, since they desire to have their students acquire serious listener attitudes.

The Federal Radio Education Committee has assumed a large share of the responsibility for initiating and for coordinating research studies which throw light on several of the areas described in this scheme of classification. There yet remains the larger job of bringing the researches together under the categories set forth in this report. When a ready reference of radio research becomes available, many of the most valuable studies will be taken out of the realm of the purely academic. We will then have taken a long step forward in realizing the potentialities of radio as a cultural medium.

(Signed) John W Studebaker  
U S Commissioner of Education and  
Chairman, Federal Radio Education  
Committee

## INTRODUCTION

Recently an educational group producing a program on the subject of democracy went to considerable expense in time and money to bring a Greek chorus into the program. This feature undoubtedly added much to the artistic perfection of the program. Nevertheless, a feature analysis among listeners definitely indicated that the Greek chorus was generally disliked whereas the narrator who had less prominence on the program proved a highly popular element.

Inasmuch as this particular program opened with the Greek chorus it is more than likely that its potential audience suffered considerably among those impatient listeners who quickly turn to another program when they are displeased. In addition, the message intoned by the chorus was largely lost upon listeners because their dislike for this form of presentation was a reflection of the mental confusion which it produced. Here is an excellent example of a program production problem where advance research certainly would have been of value to those interested in effectively presenting their message.

The type of research which produced the results cited above is just one of the many varieties of research of value to those working with educational programs. However, such data as are now available or may become available from studies currently underway are not classified in such a way as to be of real value to those who can make the most use of the results.

There is definite need for a classification of radio audience research according to the users or potential users of research findings. Such a classification should be a contribution to the important job of getting research results into the hands of those connected with educational broadcasting. Particularly is this so because it is quite evident that in most cases, those who have the greatest need for research findings lack either the knowledge, the time, the facilities, or the inclination to search the literature for usable data.

It was suggested to the writers that a classification of this type might be developed in the course of planning for the work study group on Research and Educational Broadcasting at the Eleventh Annual Institute for Education by Radio (held at the Ohio State University, Columbus, on May 1, 1940).

The object was to construct a time-saver that would permit any person, whatever his connection with educational broadcasting, to find and apply more easily to his own work, the findings in this field. This classification is developed solely for that purpose. There has been no intention to allocate particular types of data arbitrarily to particular groups of people.

Those connected with educational broadcasting may be broadly classified as producers, distributors and consumers of educational programs.



- A. The producers are all those associated with broadcasting; station managers; program, educational and publicity directors; sponsoring educational and public service groups and agencies.
- B. The distributors are: teachers in classroom, college and normal school; supervisors, and state departments of education.
- C. The ultimate consumers are the listeners, who would be represented by:
  1. Civic groups
  2. Administrative groups

Although it is unlikely that the listeners will be able to use the results of research directly, certain civic and administrative groups representing them may find several important uses for research data. Typical of civic groups are parent-teacher associations, women's clubs and adult education groups. These groups may be said to consume educational broadcasting directly, without the mediation of any distributor. (The fact that some of these groups may also function as producers of programs should not obscure the fact that essentially they represent segments of the listening public.) By administrative groups are meant the Federal Radio Education Committee, the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, the U. S. Office of Education and the like. We will distinguish here, then, between four groups who may use research in educational radio, namely, broadcasters, teachers, civic groups, administrative groups.

Listener research in educational radio may be classified into two main types.

- I. On the PREFERENCES OF LISTENERS AND POTENTIAL LISTENERS.
  - II. On the EFFECTS OR INFLUENCES OF RADIO ON LISTENERS.
- I. PREFERENCES are mainly of these kinds:
    1. Quantitative, shown by amount of listening, size of audience, time of day, etc.
    2. Relative, shown by comparison of radio listening with other activities (reading, visiting, theatre and movie attendance, sports, etc.), and by preferences between programs.
    3. Content, used here to refer to
      - 3.1 Type of program (classical music, popular music, information, comedy, news, fiction)
      - 3.2 Subject matter (astronomy, history, economics, technology, psychology, etc. etc.)
    4. Production, as shown by choosing dramatizations, lectures, forums, on-the-spot broadcasts, documentaries, serials, etc.



5. Analytical, as shown by liking -- or disliking -- parts of a program (personality types, announcements, voices, pace, music, sound effects, transitions, build-ups, acting, length of program, etc.)

## II. EFFECTS OR INFLUENCES\* May be classified as:

6. Influences on program preferences. People change their radio likes and dislikes.
7. Initiating or stimulating influences. Radio may start discussion, reading, other listening or other action.
8. Changing or ingraining of beliefs and attitudes.
9. Changing or ingraining of thinking.

There are then four main groups who may use the results of research and nine main subdivisions of researches. Chart 1 indicates the thirty-six possible references of research to groups. The twenty-eight references marked with an X are discussed in detail in this paper.

Chart I

### Types of Listener Research and Groups Who May Use Them

| <u>G r o u p s</u>    |                       |                   |                |                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
|                       | <u>"Broadcasters"</u> | <u>"Teachers"</u> | <u>"Civic"</u> | <u>"Administrative"</u> |
| <u>I. PREFERENCES</u> |                       |                   |                |                         |
| 1. Quantitative       | X                     | X                 | X              | X                       |
| 2. Relative           | X                     | X                 | X              | X                       |
| 3. Content            | X                     | X                 | X              | X                       |
| 4. Production         | X                     | X                 | X              |                         |
| 5. Analytical         | X                     | X                 |                |                         |
| <u>II. EFFECTS</u>    |                       |                   |                |                         |
| 6. On preferences     | X                     | X                 | X              |                         |
| 7. Stimulation        | X                     | X                 | X              |                         |
| 8. On attitudes       | X                     | X                 | X              |                         |
| 9. On thinking        | X                     | X                 |                |                         |

\* - Each of these four types of effect may be subdivided according to the magnitude of the effect. A change in attitude, for example, may be an "impression," an "influence," a "change," or a "reform," depending upon how permanent it is and upon how many persons are influenced. Impressions are defined as effects upon listeners at the time they listen; influences last longer but do not necessarily result in habits; changes do affect individual habits; reforms are the effects of radio as they show in the whole population, they are simply widespread and persisting changes. It is to be hoped that research in educational broadcasting will be able eventually to supply information on the extent of each type of effect listed above (6, 7, 8, 9); most research so far has been concerned with the more superficial impressions and influences rather than with the deeper, more permanent, changes and reforms.

## Research of Particular Value to Broadcasters

(1) Broadcasters want to know the size of the audience of individual programs, the trend in audience size, the proportion of regular and occasional listeners, and something about the social and geographic structure of the audience. Available commercial surveys supply most of this information for the national and a few local programs but will in general be too expensive for educational programs.\*

One of the most widespread errors in educational radio is the broadcasting of programs far too advanced in cultural and intellectual level for most of the radio listeners in the country. Educational programs judged by experts to be of the highest quality usually employ a vocabulary, pace, and range of concept that puts them far beyond the vast majority of listeners. Unpublished studies on file at the Office of Radio Research at Columbia University, data offered in the recent volume Radio and the Printed Page by Dr Paul F Lazarsfeld, and Beville's study mentioned above, all agree in finding that the audience for the well known adult educational programs consists mainly of high school and college graduates, while close to half of the adult radio audience has had no high school education.

There is known to be a strong correlation between income and educational level. Since income is more easily estimated than educational level, it is frequently substituted for the latter in listener research. For this reason the findings reported by Beville\*\* showing that those of higher income listen much more to educational programs, may be interpreted to mean that persons of higher educational level listen more to educational programs. If radio is to fulfill its promise in education, it is clear that this situation must be widely changed. In addition to supplying educational material to the few of high income and high educational level, who need it least, educational broadcasters should turn their attention to supplying more easily assimilable educational material to the vast majority of the population, of low income and educational level.

An over-all picture of the audience to a single program can be obtained quickly and inexpensively if the services of a volunteer civic or educational group can be secured for making coincidental telephone calls. For example, R H Hudson, of the Rocky Mountain Radio Council, (Denver, Colorado), estimated the size of the audience to several programs that the Council sponsors in several communities by this method. The survey was completed in a few days and the cost was very small.

\* - Many examples and applications of information of this type may be found in H M Beville's report "Social Stratification of the Radio Audience," 1939, mimeographed, \$1.00. Available through the Office of Radio Research at Columbia University.

\*\* - Beville, H M, "The ABCD's of Radio Audiences," Public Opinion Quarterly, June 1940, Vol. 4, No. 2.

An inexpensive and reliable survey service of the type organized by G R Garrison of the Wayne University Broadcasting Guild (Detroit, Michigan) will supply information of this type to broadcasters. Such a survey does not have the shortcoming common to most of the commercial services of failing to adequately reach families of low income level, which have no telephones.

(2) Broadcasters can use data on relative preferences (that is, preferences between programs) to estimate the desirability of changing educational programs to more nearly resemble preferred types. An analysis of programs most preferred should provide plenty of hints for the improvement of existing educational series.

(3) Data supplied by research showing preferred types of program content (news, comedy, fiction, education) can be used by broadcasters of educational programs to provide leads for the remodeling of educational programs in terms of preferred types. It is possible that educational programs that are to attract and hold the attention of large masses of people must actually be made to resemble other types of programs that are most popular before mass education by radio can be successful. At present "educational" programs are actually the least preferred type. Many people do learn a good deal from other types of program, of course, and it may well be that the popular daytime serials provide the form in which educational programs must be cast, before they will be widely accepted. Only research can decide this question, and such research is urgently needed by educational broadcasters.

The Evaluation of School Broadcasts group studied the effect of a change in content of educational music programs in cooperation with the Columbia Broadcasting System. Symphonic music using familiar thematic material taken from the folk music of America was presented on the assumption that familiarity of theme would help make symphonic music more understandable to students. Although the study is not yet complete, it appears that themes must be more familiar than those used in this study if they are to aid in increasing understanding and enjoyment of symphonic music. A large proportion of the American folk themes used turned out to be unfamiliar to most of the children who listened.

It is also possible to decide by means of listener research what general subjects and what topics are preferred by the radio audience. It has been known for quite a while that astronomy ranks high in interest among science topics. Further research will uncover many other particular content interests of this sort, although but little is known of these preferences now.

(4) Broadcasters can use immediate information supplied by research concerning preferred types of program production. The time is rapidly passing when educators-in-radio feel compelled by considerations of dignity to differentiate educational programs from entertainment. Progressive educators are unanimous in their acceptance of the principle that effective education must begin in a language, style and form acceptable to the persons being educated. Since radio programs are freely chosen, acceptability must mean preferability.

If for example it is found by research methods that not more than 20 per cent of the time on the air can be spent in carrying the message of the program explicitly, then educators-in-radio will have to modify their programs widely from existing practice.



(5) Those concerned directly with program production can get a great deal of valuable information from research done on analytical preferences. It is here that much commercial listener research has been concentrated. A good example of the technique of obtaining information on analytical preferences has been published by Coutant.\* Some of the results of this research are available to the public, many more can be deduced from the programs that are so popular. Detailed research of this type is not needed so urgently in educational radio because there is no requirement to make educational programs as smoothly unobjectionable as are the commercial programs. However, it will sometimes be found\*\* that the listener rating of a program depends on a very few features (distinguishability of voices, dramatization by speakers, pacing) and that conscious control and improvement of these will greatly improve the program.

(6) The influence of programs on preferences themselves is now beginning to become a subject for research. For example, Miss Jeanette Sayre, in studying the listeners and non-listeners to "America's Town Meeting of the Air" found one considerable group whose attitude toward the program was changed when they were induced to listen to one or two broadcasts. This group consisted of well-educated, urban residents. It is fairly certain, however, that well-educated persons coming from small towns and rural areas would like the program in even larger numbers if the coverage were adequate to reach them and if they could be induced by publicity to listen to one or two programs. Such research data should supply useful information to publicity directors interested in audience-building.

(7) Educational radio programs may initiate or stimulate further educational activity (discussion, reading, listening to other programs). Since many educational programs have as their primary aim such stimulation, studies investigating effectiveness of stimulation are badly needed by broadcasters who are also educators. Research studies of this type are now in progress under the direction of the Evaluation of School Broadcasts group of Ohio State University.

(8) The changing of attitudes is a common objective of educational broadcasts. Such changing (or ingraining) can only be estimated by careful research studies. Work in this area is now being conducted by the Office of Radio Research at Columbia University and by the Evaluation of School Broadcasters Project.

(9) The influence of educational broadcasts on the thinking of those who listen is probably the most important to all educational aims, and at the same time is the most difficult to measure. Work on this subject is being carried on in connection with a few educational series by the Evaluation of School Broadcasts group at Ohio State University. If it can be shown that first-rate educational programs do have significant effects on the thinking of those who listen to them seriously, the educational broadcaster will have fully justified his work. If such research can show what types of programs and what

\* - Coutant, F R, "Determining the Appeal of Special Features of a Radio Program," Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, February, 1939.

\*\* - As in Miss Marjorie Fleiss' study, "University of Chicago Round Table," 1938, on file at Office of Radio Research, at Columbia University.

parts of the program are most effective in developing the thinking of listeners, then broadcasters can make immediate use of this information in designing further series.

#### Research of Particular Value to Teachers

(1) Teachers must know how much listening their pupils do and what their pupils listen to if they are to have an adequate picture of the interests of those they teach. A breakdown of the amount of listening for children from different socio-economic levels will be valuable to many teachers. It might be expected that increased listening goes with decreased opportunity for other entertainment. There is however a small amount of evidence tending to show that the same programs are favorites and that the same amount of listening is done by children from upper and from lower income groups. Several studies done in different parts of the country have found an average amount of listening of 2 - 3 hours per day. Teachers will want to know such facts, especially if confirmed for their own students, since they disclose some interests of youngsters which can probably be used to motivate school work.

Another simple but important quantitative aspect of young people's radio preferences is connected with program schedule and program availability. There is but little published research that shows to what extent children's listening is conditioned by the fact that there are only a few hours in the day when he has control of the dials. Quite different conclusions about children's preferences may be drawn when the actual listening is reported in terms of what programs are on the air at the times of day for which each child can choose what he wishes.

(2) The relative preferences of youngsters for different programs seem fairly constant. Studies made in Chicago, St Louis and Zanesville show that "Gang Busters" and the "Lux Radio Theatre" lead in popularity over a wide range of ages and for both sexes. This finding, at present a tentative one, will if verified be an important one for teachers. Apparently these programs give the children some satisfactions that are not being supplied by home or school, although research data are lacking concerning the role of the movies, pulp magazines, comic strips, and some games in satisfying the same needs.

Seven hundred and fifty-four high school students in Newark were asked the question, "What are some of the radio programs from which you learn something?" Thirty-four and two-tenths (34.2) per cent of them gave "Professor Quiz"; 30.5 per cent mentioned "Gang Busters"; 17.0 per cent mentioned "Cavalcade of America"; 13.8 per cent mentioned "March of Time." Nineteen programs received from ten per cent to one per cent of the votes. This finding is equally uncomplimentary to teachers and to broadcasters. Apparently the students feel that the accumulation and retention of miscellaneous bits of information is educational. Apparently also there is not a large surplus of genuinely educational programs on the air. All the same, this is where the students are, and teachers would do well to listen to "Professor Quiz" and to "Gang Busters" so as to know one more thing that their pupils appreciate and think about.

It will be important for teachers to know how the listening interests of their students change with age, if the listening interests of boys and girls are different, and if differing occupational, national and social backgrounds affect the radio preferences of young people.



(3) The present content preferences of students do not seem to offer any very useful information for teachers. Youngsters listen mostly to entertainment programs. Many teachers would like to have them listen to more news, more forums and more educational broadcasts. These facts confront the teacher with a two-fold problem, namely, to help some students acquire the serious attitudes needed for listening to serious programs and to study the entertainment programs in order to get some picture of what the satisfactions are that the youngsters certainly get from them. Psychological studies of the motives and satisfactions that young people get from their radio listening are now under way. The effects of the 'crime-serials' on youthful listeners are being studied at the Bureau of Research in Education by Radio at the University of Texas. These will surely provide valuable information for teachers anxious to understand their students.

(4) Teachers must know something about the production-preferences of their students. It will not do to recommend regular listening to forums to students who are interested in and able to pay attention only to dramatizations; nor will the boy who uses the radio to provide fantasy material of the Superman type for himself be likely to learn much from serious science school broadcasts. Research on production-preferences for students of different ages and both sexes is needed to supply information on these points to teachers.

(5) Teachers will need to know something about the analytical preferences of their students, that is to say, preferences with respect to program elements such as voices, pace, acting, sound effects, etc. It seems probable that many of these preferences are widely different for young people of different ages, but objective findings that would permit rational choices and acceptable recommendations of programs to be made on this basis are not yet available.

(6) Many teachers are already interested in trying to influence the radio tastes of their students. More insistence or recommendation of programs that teachers consider good, are alike ineffective, but when teachers learn as the result of research of the five types just mentioned what the radio preferences of their students actually are, they will be able to recommend some programs that the students can like. In this way will students learn that the teachers have their interests at heart and that the teachers understand and sympathize with them. It is to be hoped, of course, that as educational programs are made to fit the interests of youngsters, the youngsters will gradually change their preferences to include more educational programs.

(7) Many educational programs are designed to initiate or stimulate discussion, reading and other activities. It will be necessary to do a great deal of research to find out if those programs are actually effective in these respects. Miss Jeanette Sayre's study of "America's Town Meeting of the Air" found little evidence of this stimulating effect on individual listeners. It is very likely that this program, when used by listening groups and by local town meetings, has a much bigger effect. Research on this point is in progress. A study done by the Evaluation of School Broadcasts group at Ohio State University\* with sixth-grade children in the public schools of Cicero, Illinois, showed that the radio could be used to initiate and stimulate a good deal of

\* - Reported in Miles, J R, "Radio and Elementary Science Teaching," Jnl. of Ap. Psychol. XXIV, 6, Dec. 1940.



interest in certain science activities. Transcriptions of science school broadcasts that fitted their school work were played for these children. They were then given tests to determine whether or not the programs and their utilization in the classrooms had stimulated them to find out more about the subjects presented. It was found that the groups hearing these programs did in fact do more reading, discussing and information-getting than comparable groups of students not hearing the programs. Similar research is urgently needed both on the stimulating effect of in-school and out-of-school radio listening.

(8) Educational radio may be expected to change some of the attitudes of those who listen regularly. Research is urgently needed to determine what types of attitudes are most easily changed and what groups of adults and young people are most susceptible to this influence. The Evaluation of School Broadcasts group is working on this problem with attitude tests and opinion scales given to comparable groups of school children before and after radio series. The Office of Radio Research at Columbia University, working with listener panels and repeated interviews, will shortly provide some information on these points. Preliminary studies already completed by the latter group imply that persons of neutral attitude shift more often toward one side or the other than do persons who state beforehand that they are certain of their attitudes.

(9) Teachers concerned with developing the ability of their pupils to think will be quick to see the value of research designed to test the effect of educational radio on thinking. The Evaluation of School Broadcasts group has some work in progress in this area. For example, they are testing the relative ability of high school listeners and non-listeners to "America's Town Meeting of the Air" to give good reasons for their opinions. If significant differences are found between the listening and non-listening groups, a strong case will be made for the value of this program to high school students, and teachers will know that students can be helped in their thinking by programs of this type.

#### Research of Particular Value to Civic and Administrative Groups

(1) Many civic groups, particularly Parent-Teacher Associations, are concerned about the large amount of time that youngsters spend listening to "trashy" radio programs. Judgments of the time spent in this way are made all too often on the experience of a few individual parents. It is a subject for objective research to determine the actual listening habits of youngsters all over the country. Furthermore, until more definite results have been obtained from research on effects, of the types discussed below, it will be premature to stigmatize programs as trashy. Studies reported on at the Eleventh Annual Institute for Education by Radio at Ohio State University, May 1940 (especially those by Ethel Shanas and by John P McKay) show that it is not difficult to get reliable information, at least for a single community, concerning favorite programs and total time spent. Such information should be a sine qua non for Parent-Teachers Associations and other civic groups who wish to be influential in determining the radio diet and habits of children.

Other civic groups engaged in safety, health, consumer education, or other campaigns, will need to know when they can reach the particular audience they have in mind. Research will be required to determine the best times to reach women, adolescents, children, working-men, or professional people.

Administrative groups such as state supervisory boards and the Federal Communications Commission will want to know the audience size and distribution for educational programs. Such evidence is clearly one indication of the extent to which a station is operating in "the public interest, convenience and necessity."

(2) Civic groups will want also objective information concerning the relative importance of radio in children's lives. Do children listen mainly when they have nothing else to do, or will they forego other amusements for the sake of a radio program? Will they come in off the street, will they leave a well organized playground so as to be sure not to miss a particular program? Will they neglect their studies for the sake of an interesting broadcast? Does the radio have as great drawing power for those who are scholastically apt as it has for those who find school work difficult?

It has been found, almost by accident, that many adults listen to educational programs that were produced primarily for children. How large a group of adults this is, what social and economic levels they come from, what subjects these adults find most interesting, what activities these adults forego to listen to these programs, are all unknown, but can be found out by suitable listener research. This information will be usable by civic agencies interested in general education, in particular causes, in particular groups of listeners, or in producing their own programs.

Information on the relative preferences of listeners for educational and other programs is of great importance to administrative groups even if the total amount of listening to educational programs at present is small. (The actual volume of listening in one community is being studied at Ohio State University.) The demonstration of a trend showing that this volume of listening is increasing and that more persons are coming to prefer educational programs, would provide objective evidence of the public importance of educational broadcasts.

(3) Civic groups interested in young people will need to know how their listening time is divided as between news, entertainment, quiz programs, educational programs, and so on. It may be that they are only objecting to 10 percent of children's listening, or that only 10 per cent of the children spend most of their time listening to programs judged to be objectionable. It will be important to know what children listen most to these programs, and what children least; then the interested groups will know where to focus their energies.

Civic groups interested in adult education need to know how the listening time of the particular groups they are most interested in is allocated. For example, there is a considerable body of evidence showing that individuals of lower education prefer to get their news information from the radio, and that persons of more formal education prefer on the whole the newspaper and news-magazine as a source of news. This finding is of importance to any civic group sponsoring or encouraging news programs. Similar divisions of audience preferences for the other types of programs may be expected, and these group preferences must be known, if the organization interested in radio-education is to reach the groups in the audience that it wants to reach.

(4) Administrative groups (such as the Federal Radio Education Committee) act as experts functioning for the radio audience in influencing the



radio offering of broadcasters in constructive ways. They can use the findings of research on content-preferences in several ways. If it is found that the adult audience shows consistent preferences for, say, news commentaries and humorous variety programs, this fact should affect the administrative group's sponsoring and publicizing of programs. Such a finding surely does not justify the development of programs featuring academic discussions of the great Greek philosophies or of astronomy.

(5) The preferences of young people as between different types of radio production must be studied extensively if civic groups are to make responsible recommendations concerning programs that children can like. It may be that the preferences of many young people for programs judged objectionable is not due to their content but to the interesting way they are produced. Research can decide this question: recommendations by civic groups made in the absence of this research are merely the opinions of pressure groups.

(6) Civic groups concerned with the listening habits of children will want to know if listening to one program influences the youngsters to listen to others of the same type, or if they become quickly satiated and turn to other types. Such "effect studies on preferences" are not now available, but the schedule of broadcasting for children can probably be improved by studying information on this point.

We rarely know in advance if repetition serves to get something into the youngster's system or whether it serves to get something out of his system. Some will say he is developing the habit of listening to programs of a given type, others will say he is getting rid of some kind of frustration in a harmless way. Many of the programs widely listened to by youngsters depict killings and tortures, many describe as a hero someone who has powers not possessed by anyone else, some consistently present members of other races as inhuman criminals and agents of the police as heroes. It may be, as some think, that these programs debauch young people into permanently vicious attitudes and habits of thought. On the other hand, it may be that some such period of permissible fantasy is needed by many youngsters and their other, more constructive efforts would be blocked if these destructive impulses were not given some free play. Research can supply information on these points, and civic groups can use this information to help decide their policy with respect to these programs.

(7) Civic groups are concerned with the possibility that destructive trains of thought and action may be stimulated in youngsters by some of the radio programs they listen to. A few studies have implied that children in juvenile court frequently admit the influence of gangster radio productions on their actions. Much more research is needed before it can be taken as proven, however, that these youngsters would not have been found delinquent had no such programs been on the air. Miss Ethel Skanas found that delinquent and non-delinquent boys living in so-called delinquency areas have about the same types of radio preferences, crime and mystery programs being the major interest of both groups. These programs are noticeably less popular with children coming from middle-class areas. It may well be, however, that such programs provide a valuable substitute for other destructive activity, and civic groups should not recommend, without further research, that these programs have predominantly pernicious influence.

(8) Those civic groups that are concerned with the influence of radio programs on the attitudes of young people will require a large volume of objective data before they can be sure that their recommendations are desirable and feasible. It should be clear that testimony of teachers and parents, even though large in volume and wide in spread, is not a substitute for research data. Information is urgently needed telling in detail which opinions and which attitudes are most influenced for young people of different ages, of different economic status, in different parts of the country, in the cities and on farms.

Civic groups interested in the effect of the radio on the attitudes of adults include groups interested in political propaganda and in adult education. It is evident that the publicity sections of the major political parties take it for granted that opinions can be influenced by radio, or at least that the radio can be used effectively to maintain attitudes already professed. However, the first thorough study of the place of radio and other media in influencing voters was made during the 1940 Roosevelt-Willkie campaign.\* The directors of adult education projects and workers' schools, and trades union directors have some information on these points but more data will mean less energy wasted on ineffective programs.

(9) Little information is available concerning constructive effects of radio listening on thinking. The unpublished reports of the Evaluation of School Broadcasts group show that any improvement in critical thinking as a result of listening to radio programs designed for that purpose must be very small, if indeed it exists at all. However, this conclusion by no means settles the question: Can the radio serve in adult education? The effectiveness of language courses over the air is now being studied. There can be little doubt that such radio courses as WLXAL's Modern Radio Course taught many of its listeners a great deal. However, the listening group is highly selected and the subject well adapted to radio teaching. One could not venture a general conclusion on the basis of these data concerning the effectiveness of radio in teaching people to think. It is highly probable that radio will become a unique teaching tool for certain groups, for example - for the isolated families in the Kentucky Mountains using the listening centers established by Station WKBY.

The writers believe that the foregoing classification should prove useful for the various potential users of research. In order to make this classification of practical value it will be necessary to make a fairly exhaustive study of the research done so far, classified along the lines outlined by Chart I on page 3.

Showing the preferences for and effects of radio classified by sub-groups of the audience should be a fundamental consideration in analyzing the results of such research. Such "stratification" by education, by section of country, by income group, by age, by sex, by size-of-community, etc., always helps the users of research. It is of especial importance to those interested in educational broadcasting because they rarely are interested in the entire radio audience but rather must direct each program toward a certain group.

\* - A publication covering this study by Columbia University's Office of Radio Research will be published by Chicago University Press early in 1941.

It is to be hoped that some agency will accept the responsibility for analyzing, grouping and publicizing the research now being done in the field of educational radio. In the absence of this work, most of the studies completed and in progress will, we think, be overslow in producing constructive effects on programs and in benefiting the radio audience.

Scanned from the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Records  
at the Wisconsin Historical Society as part of  
"Unlocking the Airwaves: Revitalizing an Early Public and Educational Radio Collection."



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